

## Jewish Poland and Its Red Reign of Terror

By Elias Tobenkin

A CROWD of men, young and old, pressed into the rooms of the Joint Distribution Committee of American Funds for Jewish War Sufferers at Warsaw one day last March.

All were Jews, rabbis and business men, orthodox and radical. As I entered I could read terror in their eyes. The thing of which the Jew of Eastern Europe continually lives in dread, they declared, had come to pass—pogroms were raging throughout Poland.

Border towns and towns in the heart of Poland, they asserted, were blazing with the old race hatred. Jews were being killed, wounded, driven from their homes. These men who thronged the committee's rooms were like children running to their father for protection. And the father in this case was America. "Tell it to the people of America," they urged Dr. Boris D. Bogen, director of the committee's activities in Warsaw. "Tell Wilson."

Fresh Stories  
Come In

Telegrams were coming in from widely separated districts of Poland, each telling of fresh violence against the Jews.

Turned from the telegrams to the Polish newspapers. Judging from them, Poland was idyllic in its peace. There was not a line to bear out directly the tragic story that the telegrams and the voices of the frightened Jews told. The only places in which the race was mentioned were the editorial page and the funny columns. Here the Jews were condemned or jeered at in the same spirit—as enemies to Poland.

English and French papers, four days old, just brought in by courier, were equally barren of mention of the pogroms. The Polish censorship had seen to it that not a line concerning the outrages should reach the outside world.

Dr. Bogen is an American educator and welfare worker of Jewish birth and faith. This morning he looked ill. "You cannot exactly call it illness," he said, "but I am sick—sick to the marrow of my bones. For fifty years I was a man. My faith, or race, was of little importance to the world at large—and to me, too. Since my arrival here my status as a human being has undergone a complete change. Here I am primarily a Jew—with all that it implies in Poland."

The View of  
Former Premier

The former Polish Prime Minister and leader of the Socialists, Ignace Daszynski, gave me this view of the Jewish problem.

"The meat of the Jewish question," Daszynski told me quite frankly, "is that the Polish people feel that there are too many Jews in Poland, at least there are too many of them in the cities. The number of Jews in Poland for the country at large is 10 per cent. In the cities, however, the number of Jews often runs from 60 to 70 per cent. In Warsaw the number of Jews is 38 per cent, in Lublin 48. In one or two cities it is as high as 80 per cent."

It will serve no good purpose here to give a complete list of the hundreds of pogroms, big and little, reported in Poland since last November.

Pogroms in 108 cities in Poland have been reported during the months of November and December alone. The complete list of places

where these pogroms occurred, with names of the killed and full details, is already a matter of record. It has been published in book form in Copenhagen, under the title "Les Pogromes Anti-Juifs en Galicie et en Pologne en Novembre et Decembre, 1918." The compiler of the book is L. Chasanowitch.

Another book giving the complete story of the Lemberg pogrom has appeared in Vienna and was written by M. Hickl. The title of this book is "The Lemberg Jew Pogrom." Israel Cohen, of the Zionist organization in London, has written a detailed account of these pogroms which appeared in "The London Times" and other publications in Europe and America.

Some of  
The Pogroms

The most important of these pogroms, with the number of lives lost, are as follows:

**LEMBERG**—Jews killed, 72; wounded, 443; homeless, about 10,000. In 494 cases of robbery the robbers were soldiers led by officers.

**KIELCE**—About 700 Jews wounded in pogrom of several days' duration. Scores of the wounded died.

**LUBOMIL**—Forty-five Jewish families were pillaged in course of pogrom. Five dead and many wounded.

**DZIALOSZYCE**—Twenty-four Jewish homes pillaged. One killed; several wounded.

**NISZOWIE**—Jewish homes pillaged.

**CHERZANOW**—Jewish homes pillaged. Two killed, many wounded.

**BRZESKO**—Homes pillaged; many killed.

**WODZISLAW**—Fifty Jewish families pillaged in the night of November 19. One Jew assassinated. Polish military took part in looting after changing to civilian clothes. The next day a massacre followed.

**ZOLYNIA**—Jewish homes pillaged on December 17 and 18. One killed, 12 wounded.

Herewith is a description of a few of the pogroms that have taken place in Poland since the Paderewski regime came into power. The list was supplied by the Jewish Zionist organization of Warsaw in its regular bulletins to the press. These bulletins go to every newspaper in Poland. Not one Polish newspaper printed them. Every one of the pogroms described has been protested against in the Polish Diet by the Jewish deputies. The bulletins follow:

**"VLADIMIR-VOLYNSK, Province of Volhynia.**—Polish troops in this city had an encounter with the Ukrainian troops of Petlura on January 21. They were compelled to retreat and in the wake of their retreat they started a pogrom. They began by robbing Jewish wine shops and ended with taking everything they could lay hands on. January 24 Polish troops returned and began assaulting the Jews. This created such a panic that the Jews closed their stores at 1 o'clock in the afternoon.

"The Polish legionaries then made house to house searches, robbing. Several Jewish women were assaulted by them. Officers accompanied and even led the soldiers in their raids on Jews. Officers led a raid on the hotel owned by Simche Limonik. Limonik and his wife were driven from their home and the house was plundered of everything in it, including furniture. The leading citizens of the town, Iser Zeitengold, S. M. Zukerman and Israel Shulman, were then arrested and 2,000 rubles was demanded from each. They paid and were freed.

"A delegation of two Christians



and two Jews then went to the Polish authorities and complained of the mistreatment of the citizens by the military. The commandant replied that he had been informed that a 'secret wire' had been found. Instead, therefore, of ordering the soldiers to desist from terrorizing the city, he exacted a contribution from it as a punitive measure. On Tuesday, January 28, Polish military were compelled to retreat. In their rage they killed a Jewish carpenter who was on his way to the synagogue."

**"ROZANY, PROVINCE OF GRODNO.**—After the Germans left this place there remained only a small detachment of sixty members of the Red army in the city. The Soviet Council ordered these troops to proceed to Slonim. Wednesday, January 29, Polish volunteers suddenly made their appearance at Rozany. Near the city these volunteers collided with the departing Bolshevik troops and took a number of them prisoner. There were three Jews among the Bolsheviks, and these immediately were executed.

"The soldiers then proceeded to look over the city. It was early in the morning, and the Jews, as is customary in that part of the world, were just then going to the synagogue for their morning prayers. The soldiers picked out thirteen Jews and led them away to the rear of the Polish Catholic Church. There they told the Jews that they would be shot as Bolsheviks. After beating them almost into unconsciousness they ordered the thirteen men to undress. They insisted that the men take off not only their suits, but shoes and underwear. It was a bitter cold day, but the men obeyed. The Polish legionaries took their clothes away and after permitting three of the men to escape they shot the rest, six of them dying instantly, one being seriously wounded and three escaping with slight wounds.

An All-Day  
Pogrom

"In the mean time another detachment of Polish soldiers was arresting Christian Bolsheviks, including the leader of the Bolshevik group in the city. The Catholic priest interceded in behalf of this leader and the other Christian Bolsheviks, and the Polish troops released them.

"The murder of the six Jews was

followed by an all-day pogrom, in which not a Jewish house was left out. They robbed and pillaged to the extent of 200,000 rubles. The soldiers invited the Christian population of the town to join them in the pogrom and point out the houses the Jews lived in. A few accepted the invitation. They then divided some of the loot with their Christian guides.

"In addition to the murder and wholesale robbery other deeds of brutality were committed by the score. Men were clubbed without provocation. One of the men arrested they could not recognize whether he was Jew or Gentile, and a Polish officer then hit upon a trick. He told this man to recite the paternoster. The man began to say the prayer, but was unable to finish it. The Polish officers took this as evidence that he was a Jew and beat him soundly.

"Passersby were caught by the Polish troops and beaten. One young man named Sakheim was tied to a horse and was told to gallop alongside the horse for ten versts. Another boy was saved from murder by his father giving two puds of oats to Polish legionaries. The rabbi of the city, who made a plea in behalf of the Jews, was threatened with death. In striking contrast to the action of the Polish priest of Rozany, who would not lift a finger to stop the pogrom, was the humane action of the Polish doctors in the city, who not only attended to the wounded men but went into the homes of those killed to care for their prostrate wives and children.

"After the pogrom the Polish soldiers left the city of Rozany and went to Pruzany. Now life in Rozany is completely paralyzed. As soon as it gets dark people dare not venture into the streets. The city's commerce is at a standstill, because the Polish troops have taken everything out of the city.

"On the day that the six Jews were murdered by the soldiers, one Polish officer went into a jeweller's shop and ordered made six cockades of the kind used by the Bolshevik soldiers. This is an old trick used by Polish officers. They keep these cockades in case an investigation of the murder should be made. Then they will claim the men shot were Bolsheviks, and as proof they will point to these cockades which they will assert they had taken from the slain men."

On Way  
To Synagogue

**"BREST-LITOVSK, PROVINCE OF GRODNO.**—The Polish soldiers here constantly are on the lookout for Jews on their way to the synagogue whom they arrest and put to forced labor. Several times the soldiers even entered the synagogue and, at the point of a revolver, took men away in the midst of the service. At night they attack the homes of the Jews and requisition everything they can lay hands on. The Christian population is not required to do forced labor, and no requisitions are called for from Christians."

"PINSK.—Wednesday, March 6, this city was taken by the Polish military. Thursday the soldiers scattered over the city in search of food. They invaded the Jewish section of the town, entered every home and requisitioned whatever they wanted. Protests were met with

threats. The large tobacco house of Rusk and the jewelry house of Feldman were looted. In the process of robbing many Jews were severely beaten, and two were killed."

**"RIELSK.**—The Polish legionaries entered this city February 16. They immediately started making requisitions. On the excuse that they had orders to confiscate all things made by Germans, the legionaries robbed every one and everything in sight. Several Polish soldiers entered the home of Dr. Kagan, president of the Jewish community, and searched his house. They found nothing and left. A little later another group of soldiers came. One of them planted a revolver in the house, then started to ask the doctor how he happened to be in possession of ammunition. The doctor demanded that the soldier go with him to the commandant to make explanations. The soldier replied that he was in sole authority, and demanded that the doctor give him money or he would be shot. Dr. Kagan surrendered to the soldier several thousand marks which he had in the house.

"The soldier and his companions subsequently were arrested for this robbery and confessed. They were discharged, and Dr. Kagan never got his money back.

"There are arrests by the score daily. Whoever does not lift his hat to a Polish soldier is beaten. Any one appearing in the street after 8 o'clock is beaten by the military. The Jewish population is extremely poor, as the city had gone through two severe fires recently, but it must pay a contribution of 125,000 marks to the Polish military authorities.

Attack Follows  
Appeal

"Into the home of a tailor, Alter Litwak, soldiers came the other day and searched the house. They found a pair of German pants which a Christian named Muczkowski gave him to make over for himself. The tailor and his son were thereupon arrested. At first Muczkowski, who was called as a witness by the tailor, denied that he gave him the pants, but upon seeing the soldiers beat the Jew mercilessly Muczkowski confessed. He was given the pants and told to go home. As a punishment to the old Jew, however, it was decided to give him thirty strokes with a whip. After the punishment was administered the man was unable to raise himself. It soon became clear that he was dying, but the Polish soldiers refused to let a physician examine him."

**"KALISCH.**—At noon on Wednesday, March 12, about 400 Communists among the workers employed in removing the debris in this city marched down in a body to the magistracy (City Hall). Along the way they were joined by one hundred Jewish workmen, and together they sent a delegation to the President of the city asking that he permit the issuance of larger portions of bread and that he reduce the price of meat. The President promised to grant the request of the workers and the demonstration started back, each group carrying its own banner.

"Suddenly a military automobile laden with soldiers appeared. The Jewish group was separated from the rest of the workers and an attack begun upon the Jewish workers. The affair soon became an attack upon Jews generally. The Jews

gan to gather here. There was talk of starting a pogrom, and the Jewish members of the council went to the commissary of the city to ask him that he take some measures to prevent disorder. The commissary said he saw no likelihood of disorder breaking out and no reason for taking steps, then left town.

"At 2 o'clock in the afternoon the peasants started assaulting Jews. They entered one store and looted it. The other storekeepers meantime closed their places. Thereupon gangs appeared with axes and began breaking into stores and robbing.

"The Christians, fearing that the mob might not distinguish their homes from the Jewish homes, put icons and holy pictures in the windows, and thus saved themselves. After an hour of intensive looting the militia managed to check the disorders.

"An interesting feature in connection with this pogrom is the following: A few days after the pogrom two deputies from the peasant group in the Diet, Alfons Erdman and Jan Szafranc, came to Busk. At the request of the Jewish members of the City Council these two deputies made speeches, telling the populace that pogroms are a blot upon the honor of Poland. Several Christians thereupon arose and said the pogrom in Busk was not made by Christians, but by Jews themselves, dressed like peasants and hoodlums."

Such is the life of the Jew in the provinces of Poland. What the lives of 350,000 Jews in the city of Warsaw are like was told by the Jewish editor of the Warsaw Yiddish daily, "Moment," in an open letter addressed to Prime Minister Moraczewski just before the latter resigned in favor of Paderewski. Conditions have not improved since the letter was written. In this letter Editor Nomburg says:

"Does the Minister Premier know that the Jewish population of Warsaw is now living under conditions which practically put it outside the law? In a time when all kinds of freedoms are in the air the Jewish people have lost the most elementary rights of men: the security of life and property.

"I am purposely not going into a description of conditions in the provinces, in the small towns where the agony of the murdered and the tortured cries to heaven, because you have defended yourself recently by saying that your government is too weak, that you have not the power to enforce all the laws everywhere. But in Warsaw, in the capital of Poland, where you have the means to suppress a conspiracy in a few hours, do you know what happens in Warsaw?

Fear to  
Venture Out

"Do you know that every night the Jewish quarter looks as if dead? People are afraid to venture out into the streets. Those returning home after dark walk stealthily through side streets. Do you know of the nightly shootings? Of the house-to-house searches? Do you know that there are streets in Warsaw where chronic pogroms upon Jews are going on day in and day out? Where they are robbed and degraded? Where they are dragged into soldiers' barracks to do forced and humiliating labor? And they must kiss the hands of those who torture them for the privilege of being released from such unjust detention!"

"Is the Minister President aware that such a horrible ghetto as that which Warsaw has come to have, such oppression, such uncertainty, Jews have not felt in generations? Indeed, we must go back not generations but centuries to find a parallel to such oppression of the Jewish race anywhere in history.

"As in the middle ages, the Warsaw ghetto has her gates to-day. The end of Bielanska Street is on the gate, the military barracks in the Pereyzed is the other gate. Here is the frontier. On one side lives the liberated Poland. On the other side live Poland's unprotected, oppressed, awe-stricken Jews.

"Commerce is dead. If a person still has a little something saved up from the past, he is sure to have it taken away from him by confiscation. This, of course, is done in the interest of the people: speculation must be checked. But the cruellest of all speculations, the speculation which is the cause of all of Poland's evils,—the speculation in food, which causes the constant and arbitrary inflation of prices,—this speculation goes on unmolested.

"Citizen Moraczewski, the conditions which you tolerate in the Jewish quarter are a crime against the most elementary conceptions of democratic government. They are a crime against Poland, the Poland which is in the making. For it is impossible to believe that such conditions can go on for any length of time without something horrible happening. The Christian population is becoming accustomed to the thought that the Jews of Poland are outside the law. The Jews are becoming accustomed to the thought that they have nowhere to look for help, for protection. The Jewish delegations return with insult for an answer. I look on these conditions with fear and trembling. Such an indifference on the part of government toward them the Jews have not had in their worst times—not in the times of Russian rule, not in the times of German occupation. I know it is a terrible thing to make such a statement, but what is the profit in my being silent when the facts themselves cry aloud these truths?"

Jews Demand  
Protection

"Citizen Moraczewski! The present state of affairs cannot go on. The Jewish population of Warsaw demands protection of you. Give us safety. Three hundred and fifty thousand Jews of the Polish capital cry for it and you must give them an answer."

Editor Nomburg's statement that the Polish government has work and opportunities for the people in the "world of light" refers to the fact, which has caused much bitterness, that the Polish government has not only disregarded the Jewish population in the appointment of men to various city, state and national offices, but has even gone further and has discharged practically every Jew formerly employed in government work.

Investigation in Warsaw disclosed that while there are in that city about 12,000 communal workers the Jews as a class are excluded from these positions. This despite the fact that the Jewish population in Warsaw is 38 per cent of the entire population.

A similar situation prevails on the railroads. Before the revolution of November 11, which gave Poland her independence, there were several thousand Jews working on the railroads in Poland. With the entry of the new Polish government these men lost their jobs and far less efficient men were put in their places. Jewish engineers and surveyors are walking the streets of Warsaw, haggard and desperate, because Poland will not give them work, and they cannot emigrate because the frontiers are closed. There is not a Jew working on a streetcar in Warsaw.



On the way to fight Red rule—the Polish Legion

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General Haller returning to his famous Polish Legion

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